

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:
an egg-based substance ~~a natural egg component~~ comprising between about 65 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material;
a water-absorbent thickener comprising between about 0.2 weight percent and 8 weight percent of the egg-based material, the water-absorbent thickener being distributed throughout the egg-based material; and
pieces of supplemental food distributed throughout the egg-based material, the water-absorbent thickener effective to maintain distribution of the pieces of supplemental food throughout the egg-based material, and wherein the egg-based material originates substantially no free water upon freezing and then thawing and exhibits the same or similar organoleptic characteristics after freezing and thawing as the egg-based material had prior to freezing and thawing.
2. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the supplemental food is selected from the group consisting of cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, grain, and any of these in any combination.
3. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based substance includes a natural liquid egg component ~~is selected from the group consisting of~~ natural liquid whole egg, natural liquid egg yolk, natural liquid egg white, and any combination of any of these.
4. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the water-absorbent thickener comprises chunks, pieces, particles, or crumbs of a cooked food product.

5. (Previously Presented) The egg-based material of claim 4 wherein the cooked food product comprises bread, cracker, cookie, tortilla, breakfast cereal, cake, or crust, or any of these in any combination.

6. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 4 wherein the concentration of the cooked food product in the egg-based material ~~ranges~~ includes up to as much as about 25 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material.

7-8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein heating of the egg-based material sufficient to substantially coagulate ~~the egg-based substance the natural liquid egg component~~ is effective to transform the egg-based material into an egg-based product that exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

10. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based material has a fluid, flowable consistency.

11. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the water-absorbent thickener is capable of absorbing at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35.degree. F. to about 70.degree. F.

12. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based material further comprises a liquid dairy material.

13. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 12 wherein the liquid dairy material comprises ~~from~~ whole milk, reduced-fat milk, skim milk, dairy cream, buttermilk, sour cream, or yogurt, or any of these in any combination.

14-16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 1 wherein the egg-based substance includes a the natural liquid egg component that is coagulated.

18. (Cancelled)

19. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 17 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

20. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 19 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material comprising:

~~an egg-based substance-a natural egg component~~ comprising between about 65 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material;
a cooked water-absorbent material distributed within the egg-based substance, the cooked water-absorbent material comprising about 0.2 weight percent and 8 weight percent of the egg-based material, and wherein the egg-based material originates substantially no free water upon freezing and then thawing and exhibits substantially similar chewability characteristics after freezing and thawing as the egg-base material had prior to freezing and thawing.

23. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein:

the ~~egg-based substance includes a~~ natural liquid egg component ~~that~~ comprises free water; and
the cooked water-absorbent material comprises bread crumbs, free water of the natural liquid egg component absorbed in the breadcrumbs.

24. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein the cooked water-absorbent material comprises chunks, pieces, particles, or crumbs of a cooked food product.

25. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 24 wherein the cooked food product comprises bread, cracker, cookie, tortilla, breakfast cereal, cake, ~~and~~ crust, or any of these in any combination.

26. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein one gram of the cooked water-absorbent material is capable of absorbing at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35.degree. F. to about 70.degree. F.

27. (Currently Amended) The egg-based material of claim 22 wherein the egg-based substance further comprises a stabilizing agent, the concentration of the stabilizing agent in the egg-based material ~~ranging having~~ up to about 5 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material, and the concentration of the cooked water-absorbent material in the egg-based material ~~ranging having~~ up to about 25 weight percent, based on the total weight of the egg-based material.

28. (Currently Amended) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 22 wherein egg-based substance includes a the natural liquid egg component ~~that~~ is coagulated.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 28 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

31. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 30 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

32. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 22, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

33. (Previously Presented) The egg-based material of claim 32 wherein the supplemental food comprises cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, or grain, or any of these in any combination.

34. (Currently Amended) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 32 wherein the egg-based substance includes a the natural liquid egg component that is coagulated.

35. (Currently Amended) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:
an egg-based substance, a natural egg component comprising between about 65 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material;
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material, one gram of the water-absorbent material effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35.degree. F. to about 70.degree. F.; and
a liquid dairy material;
wherein the egg-based material originates substantially no free water upon freezing and then thawing and exhibits substantially similar chewability characteristics after freezing and thawing as the egg-based material had prior to freezing and thawing.

36. (Previously Presented) The egg-based material of claim 35 wherein the liquid dairy material comprises whole milk, reduced-fat milk, non-fat milk, dairy cream, buttermilk, sour cream, or yogurt, or any of these in any combination.

37. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 35 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

38. (Cancelled)

39. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 37 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

40. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 39 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

41. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 35, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

42. (Previously Presented) The egg-based material of claim 41 wherein the supplemental food comprises cheese, cooked egg, meat, fish, shellfish, vegetables, fruit, or grain, or any of these in any combination.

43. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 41 wherein the egg-based substance includes a natural liquid egg component that is coagulated.

44-52. (Cancelled)

53. (Previously Presented) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:
an egg-based substance comprising between about 65 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material, one gram of the water-absorbent material

effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35.degree. F. to about 70.degree. F.; and

added water wherein the egg-based material originates substantially no free water upon freezing and then thawing and exhibits substantially similar chewability characteristics after freezing and thawing as the egg-based material had prior to freezing and thawing.

54. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 53 wherein the egg-based material has a fluid, flowable consistency.

55. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 53 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

56. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 55 wherein the cooked food product exhibits freeze/thaw stability.

57. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 55 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

58. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 57 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

59. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 53, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

60. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 59 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

61. (Previously Presented) An egg-based material, the egg-based material comprising:

an egg-based substance comprising between about 65 weight percent and 99.5 weight percent of the egg-based material, the egg-based substance comprising a natural liquid egg component;
a stabilizing agent;
a water-absorbent material comprising between about 0.2 and 8.0 weight percent of the egg-based material; and
added water wherein the egg-based material originates substantially no free water upon freezing and then thawing and exhibits substantially similar chewability characteristics after freezing and thawing as the egg-based material had prior to freezing and thawing.

62. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61 wherein the stabilizing agent comprises starch or gum.

63. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61 wherein one gram of the water-absorbent material is effective to absorb at least about 1.5 grams of water during a five minute absorption period when the temperature of the water ranges from about 35.degree. F. to about 70.degree. F.

64. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 61 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.

65. (Original) The cooked food product of claim 64 wherein the cooked food product has an outer surface, the cooked food product further comprising batter or breading affixed to the outer surface.

66. (Original) A fried food product, the fried food product comprising the cooked food product of claim 65 with a fried form of the batter or breading.

67. (Original) The egg-based material of claim 61, the egg-based material further comprising pieces of supplemental food.

68. (Original) A cooked food product, the cooked food product comprising a form of the egg-based material of claim 67 wherein the natural liquid egg component is coagulated.